



State of New Jersey

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Highlands Council Completes Second Round of Municipal & County Outreach

Chester, NJ- The New Jersey Highlands Council successfully completed its second round of Municipal and County Partnership meetings last week. Held at the Council office in Chester, the meetings drew almost 100 municipal and county officials from throughout the Highlands Region.

"These Partnership meetings are critically important for municipalities affected by the Highlands Act," said Council Vice Chairman Jack Schrier. "As the Council puts the Regional Master Plan together and diligently solicits input, Partnership meetings are an additional public forum for local officials to give us their views and concerns."

Last week's meetings included presentations by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) as well as a presentation on the Regional Master Plan process from Highlands Council staff.

"We also extend our thanks and compliments to the DEP and COAH for providing their expertise to our Highlands constituents," said Vice Chairman Schrier.

Highlands Council Executive Director Adam Zellner noted that, "the Partnership meetings provide a structured forum for us expand upon the excellent constituent work that our staff does every day. As such, they are an integral component of our comprehensive outreach program."

The Council also used the meetings as an opportunity to introduce two new abstracts. The first, "*Update of the Development of the Regional Master Plan*," deals with the structure of the Regional Master Plan as well as the issue of mandatory and discretionary standards for Planning Area towns who choose to opt-in to the Regional Master Plan. The second abstract "*Addressing Housing Needs and Obligations in the Highlands*," discusses the Council's attempts to balance the need for affordable housing in the region with resource constraints and municipal visions. The Highlands Council understands that the issues discussed in each of these abstracts are of

great importance to municipalities in the region. As such, both are available online at <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/OutReach.html> and the Council welcomes input from public officials on these matters.

While the Council is always available to hear from Highlands officials, the next formal opportunity for municipal outreach will occur at the League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City, November 15-17. The Highlands Council will have a booth in the Exposition Hall where staff members will be available to answer any questions that municipal officials may have.

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